

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed 06/15/2004 (hereinafter referred to as the OA) has been received, and its contents carefully studied. The applicant presents this response and amendment which applicant believes is fully responsive to the OA.

The applicant further believes that for the reasons set out below, the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests consideration for same.

Response To Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 5 have been amended to address the concerns of the Examiner pointed out on page 1 of the OA. In light of the amendments, Applicant believes the presently pending application has overcome the claims objections thereby.

Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a)

Pending claims 1 – 8 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious in light of Burns et al. (US Patent 6,048,269, hereinafter Burns). Applicant will respond

to the rejections of independent claims 1 and 5 before addressing the rejection of the pending dependent claims.

Application believes independent claims 1 and 5 are allowable over Burns, having a combination of elements both (i) not each individually taught or shown in Burns and (ii) not shown nor configurable in the functional combination claimed. At least one important difference is that the pending claims specifically require that the transactional identifier be generated by a terminal. This is not taught or disclosed in Burns.

Applicant feels it will be helpful to present an overview of Burns' system in order to provide the background by which the differences between Burns' and the claimed invention is made clearer. A top-level overview of Burns' systems follows this paragraph, which is then followed by a top-level view of the system of the present invention. Following the overviews are specifics on traversing the rejection under Burns.

Burns' System: Central Control With No Player Terminal Actions

Burns discloses a gaming system having a central server ("CPU" or "Host CPU" in Burns) and gaming machines, where the player may insert cash in the form of paper currency and cash-out slips into the gaming machine, with the gaming machine passing all information to the central server for processing. The Burns' gaming machine also has a printer usable to print cash-out slips. It is important to note that Burns teaches that any

information on printed cash-out slips is generated by Burns' back-end system (see generally Burns' claims; also col. 2, lines 32-47).

Burns' gaming machine (player terminal) or cashier's terminal does not process or generate any information, including but not limited to any type of transaction identifier. The information on a cash-out slip is sent directly to the central server for processing and the printing of a cash-out slip is also completely controlled by the central server, including all data and information thereon. Thus, all ticket printing ("cash-out slip" printing) and all data read from tickets is sent to and from, and controlled by, Burns' central server (see generally Figure 1, col. 5 lines 8-15; col. 6 lines 21-36). The terminals in Burns send information read from tickets directly to the central server and the central server sends control information (including game credits to be used by a player, see col. 5, lines 31-39) or information to be printed on a cash-out slip to the printer located on player terminals (col. 6, lines 21-46). In addition, there is no teaching in Burns of the gaming machines associated any values with any transaction IDs which are transmittable to a backend system for later retrieval.

Also disclosed are cash-out machines, which sends the information read from the ticket to the central system, and where the central system either validates the ticket and send control information back to the cash-out machine to dispense a specific amount of cash, or declares the ticket invalid (col. 7, lines 5-29).

Burns discloses the use of a random number, generated by and used only by the central system, as the method by which unique tickets can be generated and checked at a later time. The tickets each have the random number and value of the ticket recorded on the ticket itself (col. 6, lines 21-36), with the bar code having that information encoded therein generated by the server (not generated by any other machine).

Burns does not teach or suggest a gaming machine that can generate a unique identifier nor read and interpret (decode) the tickets input at the game machine. In Burns there is no processing done by the gaming machine: no data generation or data being acted upon; no ID generation; no decoding and/or decrypting of the tickets in order to process the information by the game machine; no associating a value with a transaction ID; or, any similar functionality. The Burns' gaming machines are pass-through devices for the information on a ticket; this means the Burns' gaming machines pass data to and from the ticket reader/printer without acting on it or understanding it.

The Claimed Terminals And System: Substantively Different Than Burns

The system and elements being claimed differ from Burns. The claimed system has terminal devices (including exchange terminals, cashier terminals, player terminals and the like) where the terminals generate unique transaction IDs to uniquely identify each voucher (amongst other actions). The claimed system has a central server with a database configured to store each individual transaction and its data using the unique transaction numbers generated by the terminals as an identifier in the database. The

terminals are active devices; the central server does not generate transaction numbers, the terminals do. The central server has the database having transaction IDs and associated data thereon; the central server is passive as compared to the server in Burns, and does not have the control that the Burns' server does (for example, does not control the voucher printer/readers on terminals, which Burns' server does).

The claimed system as a whole, as well as the specific elements therein including the terminal and server elements, is not disclosed or taught by Burns. The claimed terminals are not pass-through devices, as those in Burns are. The claimed terminal devices are enabled to issue vouchers by generating the unique transaction numbers (transaction IDs) then encoded and printed on the vouchers, and to associate a value with the generated transaction ID and make the transaction ID and associated value available to be stored on a server; additionally, the claimed terminals can read vouchers and interpret the raw data thereon, extracting and then sending transaction IDs and associated data as such (not as raw bar code data as taught in Burns, but as the transaction ID and the associated data already decoded from the bar code) to a central server. The central server in the currently pending claims stores the transaction ID generated by a terminal; it does not generate transaction IDs nor does it read and decode raw bar code data.

Thus, in Burns both the central server and the gaming machines are functionally different than that of the presently claimed system. Burns' central server receives raw data (bar codes) from the ticket reader/printer, the central server extracts transaction

numbers/IDs and associated information therefrom, the central server generates all transaction IDs, stores them in memory, and directly controls each printer on each game machine. The terminals and central server of the present invention are different elements than are taught in Burns, having different functional capabilities as described above. In addition, the claimed system as a whole (all the elements put together) functions differently than Burns' system. Applicant will now address specific aspects of the claims rejections.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103

Independent claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious in light of Burns. Applicant will address the rejection of the two pending independent claims before addressing the dependent claims (2-4 and 6-8).

Applicant will address one clear distinction between the presently claimed invention and Burns (at least one aspect not taught or disclosed in Burns). The OA states the following (page 3, paragraph 3a):

“Moreover, Burns discloses generating a transaction identifier at the host CPU (Fig. 1). Further, generating a transaction identifier at a player terminal would have been well known.”

Applicant agrees with the first sentence and respectfully but definitely disagrees with the second sentence. If the second sentence were true (that it was well known to have player terminals generate transaction identifiers), then there would be prior art on point.

Applicant has found none, and respectfully notes the Examiner has not cited any either.

To the best of Applicant's knowledge Applicant was the first person to design and implement this type of a system. Up to the time of Applicant's system, player terminals have never been designed or built to have the ability to create a unique transactional identifiers on a per transaction basis, associate the just created transactional identifier with a value, and make that associated transaction ID and value transmittable to a central server.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that at the least (i) Burns does not teach or disclose a player terminal having the ability to create transaction identifiers and to associate the generated transaction identifiers with a value, and (ii) without some objective teaching, it is not obvious to have constructed player terminals in the claimed manner. Thus, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's statement that "Further, generating a transaction identifier at a player terminal would have been well known."

According to MPEP § 2144.03, "any rejections based on assertions that a fact is well-known or common knowledge in the art without documentary evidence to support the Examiner's conclusion should be judiciously applied...It is never appropriate to rely solely on common knowledge in the art without evidentiary support in the record as the principal evidence upon which a rejection is based." In this case, the Examiner has stated that it was known at the time of the invention to design player terminals having the claimed functionality. As a result, Applicant respectfully requests objective evidentiary

support for the assertion that generating transactional identifiers and associated it with a value to be transmitted to a backend server was known at the time of the invention.

For at least the reason just discussed, Applicant believes independent claims 1 and 5 are patentable over Burns.

Rejection of dependent claims 2-4 depending from claim 1 and dependent claims 6-8
depending from claim 5

Responding to OA rejections of the above-listed dependent claims and without reaching the specific arguments therein, since each dependent claim inherits the elements and limitations from the independent claim from which it depends, and since Applicant believes Applicant has shown each currently pending independent claim (1 and 5) is patentable over Burns, then each dependent claim is also patentable over Burns.

Summary

Applicant respectfully submits Applicant has shown the presently pending claims are not obvious in light of Burns. This is due to the fact that that at least, there is no teaching of the functionality contained in the individual elements of the presently claimed invention (including generation of transaction identifiers and associated them with values in player terminals) in the cited prior art.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections thereby, and respectfully requests consideration for allowance.

It is believed that this office action response and amendment is fully responsive to the OA and places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests consideration for allowance. Please feel free to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions, or for a discussion to clarify any aspects of this response.

Respectfully submitted,



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